



Brunel University launches national stakeholder consultation forums on e-Government

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Brunel University together with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA) to work with key partners and practitioners throughout the UK to identify and prioritise key research issues surrounding e-Government implementations - to help set the national e-Government research agenda until 2010

Uxbridge, 15th March 2006 - Brunel University launches an ambitious programme of consultation forums across the UK for stakeholders to highlight challenges around the development of e-Government infrastructures. The move is part of a project towards the development of a Virtual Research Institute into eGovernment (VIEGO), funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) to help identify critical research issues that can be drawn from current e-Government implementations through the experiences of practitioners in local Government and beyond. The forums seek to engage with key stakeholders and capture their experience of implementing e-Government systems to-date, which will lead to the development of an integrated road-map for future e-Government implementations.

Over the coming months, the University will run a series of workshops throughout the UK, co-chaired by Professor Zahir Irani who is the Head of Information Systems and Computing at Brunel, and Dr Paul Jackson from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). The information obtained from the workshops, along with feedback from planned dedicated consultative meetings with the Cabinet Office e-Government Unit and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), will lead to the publication of a joint report "Electronic Transformation of Government in the UK: A Research Agenda" by project VIEGO and published through CIPFA, in late June 06.

Four consultation meetings are planned, beginning with a meeting in London, followed by meetings in Cardiff, Manchester and Edinburgh in March, April and May, respectively. Care was taken to ensure sufficient UK regional coverage could be obtained, including participation from the Welsh Assembly and Scottish Executive. Those wishing to attend the workshops or to be kept informed of news from project VIEGO should send by email their organisational details to the session coordinator: Mr. Omiros D Sarikas (omiros.sarikas@brunel.ac.uk).

Dr Paul Jackson of CIPFA explains: "[in VIEGO] we don't have the answers before we start, so this makes our starting position good. I am confident that we will be able to create a meaningful research agenda that can make a difference".

Professor Zahir Irani, the principle investigator at Brunel School of Information Systems, Computing and Mathematics says: "Local authorities and government agencies have risen to the challenge of building an e-Government infrastructure, often from nothing. However, almost all of this work has been developmental, reacting to central Government mandates. It is now time to reflect on what has been done and to establish a research agenda to make the UK a world leader in e-Government practice".

The VIEGO project represents the first stage of a broader eGovernment research strategy, with second-leg funding being sought from EPSRC and the Economic and Social Research Council - ESRC. In the second stage, Brunel, in collaboration with other centres of research excellence throughout the UK, will coordinate and explore an integrated series of research projects in response to the research agenda identified through project VIEGO. This second phase, will address the future challenges surrounding transformational Government to coincide with the i2010 Lisbon Strategy, which sets out to achieve a single European Information Space, Investment and Innovation in Research and, Inclusion, Better Public

Services and Quality of Life.

Despite massive government funding the Cabinet Office e-Government Unit acknowledges that “the UK is not yet seen in the global vanguard of those governments who achieve excellence through electronic service delivery.” In proposing a solution the e-Government unit at the Cabinet Office calls for a “broadening and deepening of government’s professionalism in terms of the planning, delivery, management, skills and governance of IT enabled change.” The resulting co-ordinated research plan from Project VIEGO will make a significant contribution to this change process, with Dr Tony Elliman - VIEGO co-investigator at Brunel University - explaining that there is a need to “do ‘IT’ better and improve Government IT Professionalism” which can be delivered in part, through the research roadmap being developed by Brunel University.

The emergent research agenda from the consultative process will be presented to EPSRC with the intention of the work being funded and commencing from April 2007.

Further details can be obtained from the investigators Professor Zahir Irani: (zahir.irani@brunel.ac.uk) and Dr Tony Elliman (tony.elliman@brunel.ac.uk).

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